

**Camden Select Board
Minutes of Meeting
January 19, 2010**

PRESENT: Chairperson Karen Grove, Vice Chairperson Deborah Dodge, John French, Anita Brosius-Scott, Morgan Laidlaw, and Town Manager Roberta Smith. Also present were members of the press and public.

ABSENT: Town Attorney William Kelly

Contents

1. Public input on non-agenda items
2. Report from Dan Bookham, Executive Director of the CRL Chamber of Commerce regarding Camden Windjammer Festival plans for 2010
3. Consideration of request from Mid Maine Sports Car Club to block off parking spaces along Chestnut Street for a Vintage British car show on Sunday, June 13, 2010 from 1 pm to 4 pm
4. Approval of the request to close Atlantic Avenue on January 30th from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm for the annual Winterfest in the Camden Amphitheatre
5. Presentation from Citizens for Value in Education
6. Review of credit card survey results and possible vote to accept credit cards at the Finance Office Review of Draft 2010 Capital Improvement Plans
7. Continued discussion of long term strategic goals for the town
8. Committee Reports
9. Manager's Report

Minutes of Meeting

Chairperson Grove called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Public input on non-agenda items
 - a. Board member Laidlaw would like to wish the staff at Gilbert's Publick House on their future endeavors. They were a very hard working group and 22 years is an impressive run.
 - b. Board member Brosius-Scott stated the carver's workshop took place on Saturday where the team carvers were instructed by Samoset Chef Tim Pierce on how to carve a

300 lb-40 inch x 20 inch by 10 inch block of ice. They had everyone from 6 graders at Ashwood all the way to professional wood carvers and chefs. They have had a lot of people sign up for the Winterfest on Saturday, January 30th from 11 am to 4pm. This is a wonderful community festival and she hopes everyone comes out and joins the fun.

2. Dan Bookham, Executive Director of the CRL Chamber of Commerce came before the Board with an update regarding Camden Windjammer Festival plans for 2010. All the bills have been paid and they have finally collected all the money from last year's event and he is pleased to report they had a surplus of \$8,000 which is ready to be used for the 2010 event. The Camden Windjammer Festival Committee started meeting about two weeks after last year's event and the decision was made at that point to make this a true community event and not just something under the umbrella of the Chamber. They are going to start their own 501(3)c , Camden Windjammer Festival. The goal is to grow an umbrella organization that allows the festival to continue but also so it can be in a position going forward to where it is able to generate a significant surplus, it's able to look at scholarship programs and other grant making opportunities for local organizations involved in preserving Camden's marine heritage.

For 2010 they plan to hold steady on the non-commercial aspect by trying to make sure it stays both a true celebration of heritage and an opportunity for existing merchants, restaurants, and stores to benefit from having people in town for the weekend. Again the goal is to strengthen and enhance the fantastic work around maritime heritage on the public landing and to work closely with the schooners and windjammer fleets to make sure we truly represent the history of town and its maritime heritage.

On behalf of the Windjammer Festival he is formally requesting permission for the same use of public facilities as the festival enjoyed last year. The use of the public landing for the event itself, the collaboration and cooperation of the Police and Fire Department who are fundamentally instrumental in making sure the event is a huge success and the services and enthusiasm of the Harbormaster.

After further discussion,

Anita Brosius-Scott made a motion to support the Camden Windjammer Festival in the same ways in which the town supported last year and allow the venue at the Public Landing . John French seconded this motion. The motion passed on a 5-0-0 vote.

3. James Lea made a request for approval to block off parking spaces for the annual car show on Chestnut Street. He is requesting this year to extend the blocking of parking spaces down to Wood Street. He has received permission from the Episcopal Church to use their parking lot if there is an overflow of parking. Manager Smith noted that the town received correspondence from the Chestnut Street Baptist Church supporting this event because the time has been changed to 1 pm – 4 pm which is when the church services are over.

Anita Brosius-Scott made a motion to approve the request from Mid Maine Sports Car Club to block off parking spaces along the street from Elm Street to Wood Street

during the hours of 1 pm and 4 pm on Sunday, June 13, 2010. John French seconded this motion. The motion passed on a 5-0-0 vote.

4. **John French made a motion to approve the request to close Atlantic Avenue on January 30th from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm for the annual Winterfest in the Camden Amphitheatre. Deborah Dodge seconded this motion. The motion passed on a 5-0-0 vote.**
5. Rockport resident, Alex Armentrout representing the group Citizens for Value In Education came before the Select Board with a group of local residents advocating for the best possible education at the lowest possible cost for students in Camden and Rockport schools. The group's recommendation is for Camden and Rockport to reduce their town's spending on school budgets from 71.4% to 60%. This kind of reduction could increase more revenue for the towns to spend on other town purposes such as public safety and road maintenance.

The group shared an analysis they did using 2009-2010 budget figures comparing SAD 28's school budget and academic testing with several other surrounding school districts. Special education was one of the largest lines in Camden's school budget. This is a very expensive part of school budgets because of the state cutbacks on school budgets. Camden Board members expressed that these numbers are not comparing apples to apples because there are a lot of varied percentages of students enrolled in special education in the different districts. Also SAD 28's reading and writing scores are high but math and science are on the low side and it was suggested that perhaps we aren't getting everything we should for our money.

The Rockport group expressed they are in favor of lowering the percentage of taxpayer's money that goes to education. There needs to be more public comment on school budgets. People need to attend the school budget meetings and get involved in the forum. They also stated they feel we do have good representation in the school board but they feel that questions aren't being asked by the public. We want a value we can afford and our taxes are getting out of control.

The presentation ended in the group requesting that the Camden Select Board encourage their residents to get involved in the dialogue around school budgets. The next meeting of the group (Citizens for Value in Education) will be on Thursday, February 4th at 7:00 pm at the Rockport Opera House

6. Last month the Board requested that the Finance Office conduct a survey of citizen interest in accepting credit cards at the Town Office. Finance Director Carol Sue Greenleaf presented the results to the Board. Carol Sue reported that 353 people responded to the survey and the results showed 180 in favor and 173 not in favor.

Board member Dodge stated she looked at what it would cost the town to do the credit card processing ourselves versus using the Harris Computer software system. If we had a deal with the bank for processing credit card charges and the fee they charged was 2 ½% and only 25% of our taxes were paid by credit card it actually would cost us \$2400 year in credit card charges versus the Harris Computers one time charge of \$1300 and \$150 yearly maintenance fee. If we are interested in taking credit card it does not pay to do it ourselves.

She could not find an economic reason not to use Harris Computers if we want to accept the use of credit cards in the Town Office.

Board member French stated he still disagrees he still thinks we are making this way too complicated. We need to go to the merchant's services and see what best deal is we can put together and treat it as a cash transaction. If you cash up every day whether they give you a check or cash you still have to count it. When the clerks have the screen up for the taxpayer and if they use a credit card you would write it in as cash because once it's approved it is cash. He thinks we are really making this a bigger than we need to. He knows with software programs somewhere down the road something is going to happen and we will end up spending money to upgrade, etc.

After further deliberation,

Deborah Dodge made a motion to buy the Harris Computer system as the Finance Director recommended in order to begin to take credit cards in the Town office for property taxes, vehicle and boat excise taxes, and other town fees. Anita Brosius-Scott seconded this motion. The motion passed on a 4-1-0 vote. (French opposed)

It was the consensus of the Board to continue looking into the services fees being charged at the Harbor and Snow Bowl for the use of their credit card machines.

Manager Smith stated the Rapid Renewal was an option if the Board decided not to take credit cards. The whole point of suggesting this program was if we didn't take credit cards and people would have the option to do their vehicle registrations on line from home either by credit card or by electronic transfer (e-check). It was just another option if the Board decided not to accept credit cards. If we were to use the rapid renewal program citizens would not have to come to the town office the state would process the registration. They would collect all the fees and send a check to the town office for the excise tax collected. The town would lose the \$3 agent fee for every transaction that was done through Rapid Renewal. It was the consensus of the Board not to offer this option at this time.

7. The Board reviewed the draft list of capital improvement projects slated for the next budget. Mrs. Smith stated capital plans are always a work in progress and this is the beginning of our budget cycle so over the next couple months we will be fine tuning these plans.
8. The continued discussion of long term strategic goals for the town was tabled to a night on its own as a workshop.
9. Committee Reports
 - a. Tax Increment Financing: Morgan Laidlaw reported the last meeting was last Thursday night and the idea seemed very well received.
 - b. Planning Board: Deborah Dodge reported they are continuing to work on a list of zoning ordinance amendments for the June ballot. They are still working on design standards for the downtown area. They have formed a working group to start looking at the Comprehensive Plan for what may need to be changed or not changed to come

- into compliance with Gateway 1. They had heard the deadline might get postponed out until 2011 but they still want to start working on that right away.
- c. Camden Rockport Pathways Committee: Anita Brosius-Scott reported the Pathways Committee is recommending a proposal for Gateway 1 that takes into consideration the Gateway along Route 1 at Elm Street beginning at the entrance of Camden/Hannaford area. They are working on planning and public input on a gateway that considers the traffic flow, the intersections, the problem with no pedestrian access to the shopping center and bus stop, connecting the people living at Quarry Hill to the grocery store and so forth, and crosswalks at the intersections. They feel all of these things are necessary to create a gateway that says you are in Camden and making that cohesive.

10. Manager's Report

- a. There is a need to have a special a town meeting preceded by a public hearing for the Tax Increment Financing District. It was the consensus at the TIF meeting last week that the public hearing and the special town meeting could be on the same night. You can have the discussion and then have a vote on the TIF. It would be better in terms of timing for state approval if we did it in the last week in February. It was the consensus of the Board to set the Special town meeting date for Tuesday, February 23, 2010.
- b. The budget schedule was sent out which is every Thursday in March and the first Thursday in April.

A motion was moved and seconded to adjourn at 10:35 pm

Janice L. Esancy
Recording Secretary